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## **Istook Gets Technology Sooner for OK**

*Oklahoma City, OK* – Even more Oklahoma students will have round-the-clock access to hand-held computers in the coming year thanks to a grant secured by Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK). Istook announced the additional funding today while touring Western Oaks Middle School where over 200 8<sup>th</sup>-graders have been using hand-held computers since November as part of what has become the largest school-wide educational deployment of hand-held computers in the country.

**“Oklahoma is pioneering the use of hand-held technology,” said Istook. “In addition to preparing the way for others, the program better prepares our students today for the high-paying jobs of tomorrow and will help attract those jobs to Oklahoma.”**

Istook announced today that he secured an additional \$525,000 for the project in the FY 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill which passed the U.S. House last week and is expected to be signed by the President this week. The additional funds will be used to expand the program to 11-graders at Putnam City West High School and to students in the Shawnee school district.

The Putnam City School District currently has over 1,500 students using hand-held computers as a part of the program funded through a federal grant secured by Istook last year. The program includes approximately 500 8<sup>th</sup>-graders at Mayfield Middle School and Western Oaks Middle School and approximately 1,000 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders at Putnam City West High School.

Istook came up with the idea for the pilot program in 2001. He then led Oklahoma administrators on a trip to smaller educational deployment of hand-held computers in a school district near Chicago. Istook has subsequently secured the necessary federal grants for the funding of the program.

Today, Istook visited with teachers and students and reviewed research that has been gained from this pioneering effort.

The Palm Access = Learning Success (PALS) program is a part of a federally-funded, 3-year pilot program during which researchers from Oklahoma State University will measure the effectiveness of unlimited one-on-one computer access in raising test scores and improving student attitudes toward learning. Also as a part of the grant, the University of Central Oklahoma will help train teachers on how to incorporate hand-helds into their curriculum.

**“Soon every school will have this technology, but those who jump in first will enjoy the most benefits,” said Istook. “I believe Oklahoma can lead the way. It's the quickest and least expensive way to put computer technology in the hands of every single student, so they are using it every day during and out of school, and not just occasionally in a computer lab.”**